

Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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USIE-00 INRE-00 USSS-00 AF-10 DRC-01 /139 W

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O 062200Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5107

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

S E C R E T JIDDA 4312

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, SA, XF

SUBJ: KING FAISAL'S VIEWS AND OUTBREAK OF LATEST ARAB-
ISRAELI HOSTILITIES

SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES KING FAISAL NOT INFORMED OF WHAT WE ASSUME WERE EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN PLANS TO INITIATE HOSTILITIES AGAINST ISRAEL. FAISAL LIKELY TO BE DISMAYED AT THESE DEVELOPMENTS BECAUSE THEY MAY RESULT IN (A) SETBACK TO HIS EFFORTS TO DIMINISH ARAB ALIGNMENTS WITH COMMUNIST BLOC, (B) INCREASED RADICAL CRITICISM OF SAG'S GENERALLY MODERATE PRO-U.S. STANCE, AND (C) PERHAPS EVEN DEMANDS THAT SAG RESORT TO OIL WEAPON TO ASSIST A CAUSE WHICH DEFEATED MILITARILY AND DIPLOMATICALLY ON DEFENSIVE. IN COMING DAYS KING WILL BE IN FOUL MOOD AND DISPOSED TO BE CRITICAL OF ANYTHING EMANATING FROM USG. TO COUNTERACT MISLEADING REPORTS THAT HE WILL BE RECEIVING FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA, HOWEVER, AND IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN HIS BASICALLY MODERATE DISPOSITION, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH REGULAR AND UP-TO-DATE ACCOUNTS OF DEVELOPMENTS ON MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC FRONTS. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE OUR VERSION

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OF EVENTS TRUE AT TIME OF "BIG LIE" AND IS SO AGAIN TODAY.

A/DCM BIRD ON WAY TO RIYADH TO ACT AS EMBASSY CONTACT MAN.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN EIGHT HOURS THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING BETWEEN ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SYRIA FIRST ANNOUNCED, SAUDI REACTION HAS BEEN ONE OF SILENCE AT OFFICIAL AND DIPLOMATIC LEVELS. SAUDI MEDIA MENTIONED FIGHTING ONLY EIGHT HOURS AFTER IT BEGAN WITH FEW DETAILS AND EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL APPROACHES NOR QUERIES FROM SAG ABOUT WHAT MAY BE GOING ON.

2. WE CAN SURMISE, HOWEVER, THAT FAISAL MAY BE UPSET AND DISMAYED THAT SAUDI EFFORTS TO BEGIN TO MOVE EGYPT AND SYRIA AWAY FROM THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNIST BLOC MAY BE IMPERILED BY THEIR RASHNESS. WE ASSUME THAT FIGHTING BEGAN BY ARAB SIDE; ASSUME ALSO NEWS A SURPRISE TO HIM.: IN MEETING WITH CONGRESSMAN HANNA OCTOBER 3, KING SEEMED IN RELATIVELY GOOD TEMPER WHILE DISCUSSING ARAB-ISREALI QUESTION, AND EVEN WENT SO FAR AS MAKE SMALL JOKE ABOUT POSSIBILITY US WOULD BRING ABOUT SOLUTION WITHIN TWO MONTHS (RATHER THAN THE TWO YEARS CONGRESSMAN THOUGHT WOULD BE NEEDED FOR JOB).

3. FURTHER TO THIS POINT, FAISAL IS A CAUTIOUS POLITICAL FIGURE WHO HAS SEEN THE ARAB POSITION IN PAST 18 MONTHS BECOME STRONGER AND MORE CREDIBLE WITH WORLD AND PERHAPS US PUBLIC OPINION. HE WOULD NOT WISH TO RISK SUCH ACHIEVEMENTS IN A MILITARY ADVENTURE WHICH--IF UNSUCCESSFUL--MIGHT CONFRONT HIM WITH DILEMMA OF HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN U.S. (WHERE HIS ECONOMIC AND SECURITY INTEREST LIE) AND SAUDI ARABIA'S ARAB NEIGHBORS.

4. FAISAL PROBABLY AWARE ALSO THAT IF ARAB FORCES AGAIN FACE CRUSHING DEFEAT AND IF, ACCORDINGLY, PROSPECTS OF DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION AGREEABLE TO ARABS RECEDE STILL FURTHER, SAUDI ARABIA MIGHT WELL COME UNDER PRESSURE FROM ARAB LOSERS TO INVOKE "THE OIL WEAPON." WE CONJECTURE AGAIN THAT FAISAL WOULD BE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO ACT IN RESPONSE TO SUCH DEMANDS AND WOULD LOOK FOR SOME WAYS OF MINIMIZING CRUNCH BETWEEN HIS U.S. INTERESTS AND ARAB PRESSURES. HE WILL, HOWEVER, PROBABLY BE IN A DEPRESSED PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE FOR NEAR FUTURE, AND DISPOSED TO BE EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF ANYTHING U.S. SAYS OR
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DOES.

5. IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN KING'S BASICALLY MODERATE INCLINATIONS AND TO MAKE HIM AS UNDERSTANDING AS POSSIBLE OF OUR OWN VIEWS, BELIEVE WE SHOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH ACCOUNT OF HOW FIGHTING BROKE OUT, ITS COURSE, AND CAREFUL RATIONALE FOR OUR OWN VIEWS. WE COULD REMIND HIM THAT RESORT TO VIOLENCE IMPERILS RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN ARAB DIPLOMATIC STANCE VIS-A-VIS

ISRAEL WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED THANKS IN LARGE PART TO SAUDI DIPLOMACY. WE SHOULD ALSO REMIND HIM THAT OUR ACCOUNT OF EVENTS WAS ACCURATE IN 1967 AT TIME OF "BIG LIE" AND IS SO TODAY AS WELL. (ONE CAN IMAGINE DISTORTIONS WITH WHICH EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS PROBABLY PLYING SAG.) IF WE CAN SHOW THAT OTHER ARABS ACTED RASHLY, AGGRESSIVELY AND UNILATERALLY, HIS DISPOSITION TO WITHSTAND EXTREMES OF RADICAL PRESSURE MAY BE ENHANCED.

6. A/DCM EUGENE BIRD PROCEEDING TO RIYADH 0700 LOCAL OCT 7
TO BE AVAILABLE FOR CONTACTS WITH SAG AS NEEDED.
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NNN

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